

Lindt Expands Unique All-In-One Chocolate Plant

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

Lindt Expands Unique All-In-One Chocolate Plant

Kathy McCormack, Associated Press Writer

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Swiss chocolate maker Lindt had humble beginnings when it set up its U.S. headquarters in southeastern New Hampshire back in 1989.

"At that point in time we were a very small unit, manufacturing just a few products," said Ernst Tanner, Lindt CEO. "Our brand was really not established."

Today, it has expanded to a multimillion-dollar, 350,000-square-foot complex including a new cocoa processing plant that's transforming beans into chocolate under one roof, making Lindt one of just few chocolate manufacturers in the world to have control over the whole process. The factory in Stratham is holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the cocoa plant Wednesday.

It's a milestone for Lindt, which is based in Kilchberg, Switzerland. Before the \$30 million processing plant was added, the factory would produce the cocoa in Switzerland, then ship it to New Hampshire to mix with other ingredients to produce its truffles. Now, it transports beans from Africa, Central America and South America right to Stratham, cutting up to 10,000 travel miles.

The addition of the cocoa plant is a good way for Lindt to stand out, said Marcia Mogelonsky, a Chicago-based global food and drink analyst for Mintel.

"A lot of larger-scale operations can't really afford to do this, nor is it in their best interest, since it requires a lot of money and effort to obtain the quality beans that Lindt uses," Mogelonsky said. "Lindt is a premium chocolate, their stuff is really top quality."

The cocoa plant will clean, roast and grind the beans, ultimately creating cocoa liquor, a liquid that's part of the chocolate production process.

Tanner said the new plant can process 110,000 pounds of cocoa beans a day, enabling the factory to produce 7,200 Lindor Truffles and 450 chocolate bars per minute. The factory produces chocolate for the United States, Canada, Mexico and England.

Lindt's used cocoa bean shells are sent to a power plant in Portsmouth, which are blended with coal to fuel the plant.

The company employs about 350 workers. "We are certainly going to expand as time goes on," Tanner said, as Lindt pursues a greater share of the premium chocolate market in the United States, which is in its infancy.

Lindt, which also owns the Ghirardelli Chocolate Co. in San Leandro, Calif., reached sales of \$600 million in North America in 2009, Tanner said.

Lindt Expands Unique All-In-One Chocolate Plant

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

According to the Chicago-based market research firm Euromonitor, Lindt is listed fourth among the top five chocolate manufacturers in North America and in the United States as of 2008, the latest year available. In the United States, Mars and Hershey had the biggest share at over 30 percent each, followed by Nestle at 4.1 percent, Lindt at 3.1 percent, and Russell Stover at 2.2 percent.

Source URL (retrieved on 04/21/2015 - 8:07pm):

http://www.impomag.com/news/2010/06/lindt-expands-unique-all-one-chocolate-plant?qt-recent_content=1